



The Virginia Saltwater Review

Plans and Statistics Department
2600 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor
Newport News, VA 23607-0756
<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov>

Vol. 22, No. 26
November 7, 2008

by

Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division

OVERVIEW

How the 2008 Recreational Striped Bass Chesapeake Bay season will end has been decided. The Commission voted to set a one-fish daily limit for the last 11 days of the 2008 Striped Bass Season (December 21 through December 31) in the Chesapeake Bay. The Striped Bass Season in the Chesapeake Bay ends at 11:59 p.m. on December 31.

Other than the wind and the rain putting a damper on much of this past week's activities, we have had some reports of catches from the bay and ocean. Reports of speckled trout, flounder, sea mullet, and, of course, striped bass.

And now, the fishing reports!

THE FISHING REPORT

Cape Charles

Speckled trout were reported from Chris' Bait and Tackle. Last week, a 6-pound speckled trout was caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Small flounder have been caught from the area near Kiptopeke. Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) were found around Fisherman's Island, and striped bass up to 15 pounds were landed from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel

No citations were reported from Cobb's Marina this week. Anglers caught striped bass at the 3rd and 4th islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Others were going for tautog. High winds kept a lot of people from going out.

According to staff at Sunset Boating Center, a few boats reported limits of striped bass around the Hampton

Roads Bridge Tunnel. A few anglers have also caught striped bass around the same area.

Numerous boats went out at Salt Pond's Marina recently and reported fishing success. While there were no citations, most of the catch consisted of striped bass, small flounder, and grey trout.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

A window of calm weather and satellite shots showing warm water over the 100 fathom curve enticed a fleet of boats offshore this week. Boats fishing out of Oregon Inlet found a very good yellowfin tuna bite with some catching their limits and heading back in early. Fish were caught on both the troll and by vertical jigging. A few wahoo were also caught by the fleet. Boats running out of Virginia did not have as much luck in spite of good looking water east of the Cigar. A few yellowfin tuna and false albacore were caught by Virginia boats. Boats spending the night had some luck with swordfish with one boat catching 4 swords one evening. Big amberjack continue to be caught at the South Tower. The Triangle Wrecks area has been the site of a lot of action lately. Anglers there are catching flounder, a lot of sea bass (including some over 5 pounds) and, as one angler put it, "the best bluefish action since the 70s". Big bluefish are being caught by trolling plugs, chunking bait, and by jigging with lures like Diamond Jigs. Multiple fish weighing over 16 pounds have been caught with a number of them breaking the 20-pound mark. In the bay, most fishermen are targeting striped bass, and the action is getting better all the time. They are being caught up in all of the rivers. At night, any structure with a light is likely to hold good numbers of striped bass. The largest fish this past week have been caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel by anglers wire-lining the 3rd and 4th island areas. They have been catching a lot of fish in the slot limit, and some fish over were 40 inches long. In addition to striped bass, puppy drum (juvenile red drum) and speckled trout are being caught by inshore anglers. The best spot has been the Elizabeth River, in the Hot Ditch area, where speckled trout weighing as much as 10 pounds have been caught. Back River and Lynnhaven Inlet were also producing some good speck and puppy drum action. Tautog were biting well inside the bay on any structure you could find. Good catches have come from Back River Reef and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The quickly dropping water temperatures have essentially locked in the cold water fishing season, with most species becoming more active. Anglers are reporting an upswing in the striped bass activity on all fronts, with the best developments occurring with the school-sized fish around all the lower bay bridge tunnels. Anglers are finding good luck on a moving tide, while casting Wind Cheaters, Storm Lures, buck tails, and even double speck rigs. Local tackle shops are also reporting a nicer class of fish ranging to around 40-inches coming from the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and the small boat channel of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, as well as the 3rd and 4th islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. The bigger fish are mostly falling to those using live bait and wire lining along the bridges and tubes. Plenty of snapper bluefish are also around, so keep that in mind when opting for plastics.

Grey trout are making a gracious showing around the 3rd island recently. Anglers casting Bass Assassins and jigging with Sting Silvers are scoring with decent greys to around 8 pounds.

Speckled trout are taking over the lower bay inlets, shallows, and rivers. The folks at Long Bay Pointe Bait and Tackle report that anglers are landing dozens of keeper fish, with a few boats reporting days with more than 100 specks caught in one outing. The best catches are occurring in Lynnhaven and

Rudee inlets, the Poquoson Flats, and the Elizabeth River. Most fish are falling within the 19- to 23-inch range, but many are topping 5 pounds, with a few even pushing 10 pounds. Most folks are finding that Mirrolures, white grubs, and Chartreuse Gulp Minnows are working well. There also seems to be no shortage of puppy drum, with plenty of pups to 24 inches hitting cut bait and lures in the lower bay inlets, and the surf from Cape Henry to the beaches of Carolina. Sea mullet are also a possibility in the surf.

Flounder action is still sketchy due to the dirty water inside the bay, but the flatfish catches on offshore structures has improved considerably this week, with a few citations in the mix. Nice sea bass are also active on coastal wrecks, with most fish ranging between 2 to 4 pounds. Triggerfish are still around, with decent fish averaging to around three pounds biting well around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, as well as on the coastal wrecks. Several big chopper bluefish are also making an excellent showing near the wrecks this week. With all the bluefish around, expect the giant bluefin tuna to be close in pursuit. Rumors suggest there are bluefin tuna to be had from the Hotdog and the Fingers.

Tautog are a good choice for inshore wreck wranglers, with reports of limits of fish up to nine pounds coming from the tubes and islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Walker Scott of Smithfield scored with a fat 9-pound, 10-ounce tautog he hooked while fishing with crab at the 3rd island this week. The best baits lately are hermit crabs, green crabs, and blue crabs if you can find them.

Offshore activity is showing promise with the first decent catches of yellowfin tuna coming from east of the Cigar this week. Most yellowfin are in the 20- to 30-pound class right now. Wahoo is still a possibility, with a smattering of bailer and gaffer dolphin also in the mix. Swordfish hunters are finding success on overnight trips, with some boats returning with multiple sword hook-ups.

Virginia Middle Bay

Stripers, stripers, and more stripers! The bluefish started to move out, and people really began finding striped bass. They were reported around the Asphalt Pile and other artificial reefs in the area. The jetties have been popular as well with all of the wind we have been having lately. Hopefully, as this latest system moves out, anglers will be able to fan out and look in some of the other areas as well.

Capt. Jim Thompson reports the fishing this week was on a scale from great to good. Whetstone had the largest fish, by far, but the fishing was slow and you had to be patient. The Sturgeon Bar was good on the flood tide, but the fish were small. No fish were found at Butlers Hold. The Spike was great in the Rappahannock on flood tide one day and blank the next day. In the bay, off of Gwynn's Island, some days were productive while others were not. Deep Rock was the best area to fish in the bay. Most catches included sea mullet and trout. The bluefish were everywhere and the striped bass were in the river, especially at Whitestone in the Rappahannock River. The Piankatank was almost blank to those who fish it for some reason.

Virginia Beach

Weather limited a lot of fishing activity over the past few weeks at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center. Those who were able to go out found keeper striped bass in the Chesapeake Bay. In the inlet, anglers found speckled trout, puppy drum, and taylor bluefish. Near Sandbridge, there were rumors of nice puppy drum. Fishing Center staff expects good swordfish action offshore near the canyons based on water temperatures, but weather has

kept anyone from going out to verify.

Outer Banks, NC

The word for this week is wind. A strong Nor'easter has had gale and storm warning flags standing at attention for the past few days and probably will for a few more. When the wind does slacken up, anglers should be rewarded with the typical fall fare for this area. Water temperatures in the surf have fallen into the low sixties.

Offshore fishing opportunities out of Nag's Head have been limited, but when anglers have been able to get out, lots of dolphin and king mackerel have been boated along with blackfin tuna and wahoo mixed in as well. Yellowfin tuna and billfish landings have been decreasing. Anglers fishing from piers and the shore had to hold onto their hats, as well, but were able to find bluefish, red drum, spotted seatrout, black drum, croaker and spot. Inshore fishing has seen improvement in the numbers and weight of the speckled trout and red drum. Some striped bass and weakfish were caught as well.

Fishing south of Oregon Inlet has been good despite the wind. Speckled trout up to six pounds were being caught at the jetties and in the sound behind some of the motels dotting the Outer Banks. Red drum and bluefish were working around the Point, and sea mullet and spot were found at the North and South beaches.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras was limited; however, the king mackerel were in good supply along with tuna and dolphin. Fishing in the sounds has produced puppy drum and a few flounder.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.












ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA		RED DRUM	
SHEEPSHEAD		BLACK DRUM	
SPADEFISH		TAUTOG	
TILEFISH		GROUPE	
KING MACKEREL		SPANISH MACKEREL	
BLUEFISH (OVER 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

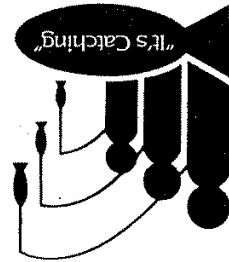
**Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:
Bell Isle Marine (Hampton) Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach) Wachapreague Marina
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)**

As of 08/27/2008



FIRST CLASS MAIL

TAKE A FRIEND FISHING



FISHERIES PLANS/STATISTICS OFFICE
VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
2600 WASHINGTON AVE., 3RD FLOOR
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607

Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water